

## **Executive Summary**

### **Fisheries Information System Second Annual Meeting**

Seattle, Washington  
September 2004

The Second Annual Fisheries Information System (FIS) Program meeting was held on August 16-19 at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center in Seattle, WA. The purpose of the meeting was to continue the communication and collaboration that FIS partners had initiated in the first annual meeting (Silver Spring, November, 2003), to evaluate progress that had been made in implementing specific projects with current year investment funds, to review an initial version of an FIS Roadmap, and to commence a dialogue on FIS Program governance that would sustain the momentum gained in the past year and provide a context and framework for all future leadership and decision making for FIS as it moves forward.

Participation in the meeting was excellent, improving significantly over the November 2003 attendance. Over 60 individuals, representing 23 different organizations attended and participated in the proceedings. All NOAA Fisheries Science Center and Regional Offices were represented, and all of the existing regional state/federal fisheries information network programs were represented.

The success of the meeting is reflected in the following key highlights and accomplishments. (More information is available in the detailed meeting minutes):

- **Convergence on intent and scope of FIS.** A much-needed discussion on the overall objectives and intent of FIS took place on the first day. There were many differing views on the role of NOAA and its partners and what the FIS was intended to achieve. The participants converged on the concept that FIS is not a single system but a “system of systems”. While complex and adaptive, the FIS is an umbrella framework for looking at the key existing state-federal programs involved in collection and management of fisheries dependent statistics, including the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP), the Gulf’s Fisheries Information Network (FIN), the Pacific States Fisheries Information Networks (PacFIN and RecFIN), and the Alaska Fisheries Information Network (AKFIN). It is clearly the intent of FIS to provide an integrated view of fisheries data, across the nation, and to leverage current and planned investments in these programs and the extensive programs already sponsored by NOAA Fisheries in its regions and science centers.
- **FY04 Project Updates.** Several presentations were made of FIS product prototypes.. These included the national InPort system, a web-based “e-catalog”, or metadata repository, of information on fisheries data collections. Also, a possible framework and capabilities of an FIS portal was presented and demonstrated.

- **Relevant Partner Program Presentations.** Representatives of partner organizations gave overviews and summaries of recent development in their fisheries statistics programs, especially as they related to elements or objectives of FIS. These presentations covered programs at state, regional, and national levels.
- **The FIS Roadmap.** The FIS Roadmap Planning Team presented a first draft of the FIS Roadmap. The discussion of this presentation led to a recognition that the current FIS strategy was too *ad hoc* and needed more structure and consistency. This led to a discussion of the need to design a governance mechanism for FIS.
- **FIS Governance.** A sub-group of the participants worked throughout the week to establish a potential governance structure for the FIS Program, recognizing that strong, disciplined leadership would be required to deliver program success and sustainability over the long term. The group worked on the following elements of a governance system: desired outcomes, organizational structure design principles, and roles/responsibilities of a strategic oversight committee and a more operational/tactical committee. These discussions and products became the basis for a draft governance recommendation, developed by F/ST1 and currently under consideration by NOAA senior management.
- **Project Selection Process.** Considerable time was spent on the concepts behind how the FIS program would select the “best” possible projects to ensure that FIS is progressing to the desired end state (recognizing that, in fact, the end may never come due to constant evolution of both business requirements and relevant technologies). The participants engaged in a detailed discussion and articulation of the desired characteristics of a credible project selection process and specific criteria that should be used in evaluating project proposals.

## Next Steps

The following items were identified as specific follow-up actions from this meeting:

1. Complete development and approval of an FIS Program governance structure.
2. Continue with the FIS Roadmap planning team to establish FIS scope and plan to set up short and long term goals, and prioritize the FIS tasks defined by the roadmap.
3. Draft and complete the FIS Program Management Plan.
4. Establish an FIS project selection process and implement at FY05 version of this process.
5. Continue implementation and monitoring of FY04 projects.
6. Continue with PSG activities to support ongoing projects and planned projects.
7. Engage directly, consistently with NOAA-wide mission area initiative.
8. Execute funding of FY04 projects.
9. Provide substantive input to MSA reauthorization.
10. Establish/abolish individual PSGs – what they will do and who will be on them.
11. Once InPort is completed, establish and execute the processes to populate it.
12. Execute Portal Project ASAP.